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Congresswoman Betty McCollum
Statement for the Record
Kirk Amendment 19 to H.R. 2410
June 12, 2009

Madame Speaker, I rise to express my opposition to amendment number 19 offered by Representative Kirk to H.R. 2410, the *Foreign Relations Authorization Act*.

Representative Kirk's amendment would allow the United States Secretary of State, at her discretion, to make payments from the Rewards for Justice program to officers or employees of foreign governments who provide information leading to the capture of exceptional and high-profile terrorists.

Upon first glance, this amendment may seem reasonable. Of course the United States wishes to encourage persons in foreign countries to assist our efforts to resist global terrorism. However, I question the necessity and wisdom of using U.S. taxpayer funds to pay employees of foreign governments for official duties they are presumably already being paid by their own governments to perform. Long-term success in the global fight against terrorism requires that America's partners make this mission an integral part of their work, not an extra-credit activity.

In addition, the effect of this amendment could be contrary to America's commitment to due process and human rights. In previous instances when soldiers or officials have been offered monetary incentives to capture "terrorists", innocent civilians have been labeled as terrorists and accusations grossly conflated so the informant can claim a financial prize or even a political score. The language of this amendment is too vague to protect against potential human rights abuses.

For the two reasons I have stated, Madame Speaker, I voted against the amendment offered by Mr. Kirk.